

was wantonly shot in the head. He's driving his fire truck, hook and ladder truck, to put out a fire, and some hoodlum comes alongside and shoots him. He's fighting right this minute for his very life. But it makes me grateful as a citizen of this country that you have courageous people like that willing to undergo the trauma that he is facing right now. So we can all maybe say a prayer for Scott and just hope that he makes it.

The men and women of the Armed Forces were out minding your own business when the call came. But I really believe this: that when it became clear—and I've talked to the Governor who's with me here today about it, talked to the Mayor of this city—but when it became clear that not only the Guard but the regulars were willing to respond and would be there, I think the very fact that the military was here, prepared to do what was necessary, served as an enormously inhibiting factor from those hoodlums that wanted to disrupt the civil tranquility of Los Angeles, indeed, of our country.

So, once again, I salute you for that. And even more fundamentally, I salute all of you who serve in uniform of the military for the United States of America. You have our profound thanks and gratitude.

I will do my level-best as President to work to help solve the problems in the communities. I pledge that. I'm going to go back to Washington; have more to say about that next week. But I'll tell you this: I will remain the President who strongly supports the law enforcement community in this country and who strongly supports our military. Without you, we would not enjoy the peace and tranquility that a lot of the rest of the country is enjoying right now. So thank you very much to each and every one of you who participated in any way in helping this great city of Los Angeles.

And the last point is this: I went around to a lot of the communities. And I have a genuine feeling in my heart that Los Angeles is going to bounce right on back and be this great city that it's always been.

So may God bless everybody here from Los Angeles, and my profound thanks to the rest of you. God bless you all. Thank you so very, very much.

Note: The President spoke at 8:22 a.m. at the Los Angeles Coliseum. In his remarks, he referred to Scott Miller, a Los Angeles firefighter who was injured during the disturbances.

Remarks to Community Leaders in Los Angeles May 8, 1992

I would get off to a bad start if I didn't say what I think everybody else is feeling, and I want to just congratulate Larisse for that marvelous rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

And may I first thank all of you for being here today. I think they were introduced at the very beginning, but I want to single out two members of my Cabinet, Secretary Lou Sullivan of HHS and Secretary Jack Kemp from Housing and Urban Development who are here with me. We've really had a good tour. I want to salute Senator Seymour, Governor Wilson, who's been at my side, both of them, as we've made this tour through the city. Pat Saiki of SBA, the

Administrator of the Small Business Administration, came out early, and she is on the ground and doing a first-class job. And of course, I would like to also salute Mayor Tom Bradley who has been so extraordinarily helpful on this visit. And I'm not going to forget the inspirational leader of the Challenger, Lou Dantzler.

I would also say to the city officials that I can just imagine, given what you all have been through, the headache that this visit has caused. And I promise you we plan to leave right on schedule so things can get back to normal. But I want to thank everybody involved in facilitating this visit that came, I'm sure, at a very complicated time

for the city. The Governor, the Mayor, the police, the L.A. community, everyone has been just fantastic.

And let me say I am truly heartened by the speed with which the millions of dollars of Federal relief have reached the city, from FEMA grants to the small business loans to urgent food aid. And I salute David Kearns and others who came here to coordinate, not to dictate, not to try to dominate but to coordinate with the city and local officials. And I'm very pleased to see that there is smooth coordination, everyone pulling together on the Federal, State, and local level.

It was important, I feel, that as President, I come here to Los Angeles. The community has been the site of a terrible tragedy, not just for you who were impacted the most but for our entire country. And everyone around the world feels this trauma, everyone who looks to us as a model of freedom and justice.

And that's why I want to say just a few things about my visit, to speak to you about what I've seen in this city and, most importantly, as I said at a marvelous ecumenical church service yesterday at Mount Zion, we are one people, we are one family, we are one Nation under God. And so I want to speak about our course as a Nation.

I can hardly imagine—I try, but I can hardly imagine the fear and the anger that people must feel to terrorize one another and burn each other's property. But I saw remarkable signs of hope right next to the tragic signs of hatred. This marvelous institution, this boys and girls club, stands unscarred, facing a burned-out block. And its leader is this wonderful man next to me, Lou Dantzler. And he started it on the back of an old pickup truck with a group of kids that wanted to get off the street. And its existence proves the power of our better selves. And let's never forget it, and let's count our blessings.

Now let me personalize it a little bit and tell you why clubs like this matter. A story about a little kid, Rudy Campbell. I saw him on television. He looked about 8 years old. His father was murdered a few years back, and I didn't see his mother. Rudy is raised by his 22-year-old sister who has five kids of her own. And he lives in South Cen-

tral. Think about what he has already been through. Now he says he fears that things will only get "badder and badder and badder." And it breaks your heart. Our children deserve better than that.

I talked a week ago about the law and the pursuit of justice. And today I want to talk about what went wrong in L.A. and the underlying causes of the root problems. It can all be debated, and it should be, but not to assign blame. Casting blame gets us absolutely nowhere. Honest talk and principled action can move us forward. And that's what we've got to do for Rudy; that's what we've got to do for our children, these kids right here.

This tragedy seemed to come suddenly, but I think we would all agree it's been many years in the making. I know it will take time to put things right. I could have said "put things right again," but that would miss a point I want to make: Things weren't right before a week ago Wednesday. Things aren't right in too many cities across our country. And we must not return to the status quo, not here, not in any city where the system perpetuates failure and hatred and poverty and despair.

Most Americans now recognize some unpleasant realities. Let me just spend a minute on those. For many years we've tried many different programs. All of them, let's understand this, had noble intentions to meet the need of adequate housing or education or health care. Much of it went to construct what has been known as the safety net, a compassionate safety net to provide security and stability for people in need. Many other programs and policies aimed at stemming the tide of urban violence and drugs and crime and social decay. And we have spent huge sums of money. Some estimates are as high as \$3 trillion over 25 years. And even in the last decade Federal spending went up for these kinds of efforts, everything from child care to welfare to health care has been the subject of some commission or report or study.

But where this path has taken us, I think we would all agree, is not really where we wanted to go. Put away the studies and just look around. For anyone who cares about our young people, it is painful that in 1960

the percentage of births to unwed mothers was 5 percent, and now it is 27 percent. It's hard to read about a young black man dying when the odds are almost one out of two that he was murdered. Kids used to carry their lunches to school, and the parents that I've talked to know that today some kids carry guns. I'm afraid some of you kids, you know that, too. Everyone knows that drug and alcohol abuse are serious problems almost everywhere.

In the wake of the L.A. riots, in the wake of a lost generation of inner city lives, can any one of us argue that we have solved the problems of poverty and racism and crime? And the answer clearly is no. Some programs, ones like Head Start or Aid to the Elderly, have shown some time-tested, positive results. All programs were well-intentioned; I understand that very, very well. Many simply have not worked. Our welfare system does not get people off of welfare, it keeps people trapped there. The statistics are sobering. The reality is sobering. The sum and substance is this: The cities are in serious trouble, and too many of our citizens are in trouble. And it doesn't really have to be this way.

Government has an absolute responsibility to solve this problem, these problems. I'm talking about all levels of government. And I've taken a hard look at what the Government can do and how it can help communities with concerns that really matter: how people can own property, own their own home, start a business, create jobs, and ensure that people, not Government, make the big decisions that affect the health and the education and the care of one's own family.

Think of the way that the world looks right now to the single mother on welfare. Government provides you just enough cash for the bare necessities. Government tells you where you can live, where your kids go to school. And when you're sick, Government tells you what kind of care you get and when. And if you find a job, the Government cuts the welfare benefits. And if you save, if you manage to put a little money away, maybe towards a home or to help your kid get through college, the Government says, hey, welfare fraud. Every one of those things happen with the system that we have in place right now. And then we

wonder: Why can't folks on welfare take control of their lives? Where's their sense of responsibility?

Well, if we had set out to devise a system that would perpetuate dependency, a system that would strip away dignity and personal responsibility, I guess we could hardly have done better than the system that exists today. Every American knows that it is time for a fresh approach, a radical change in the way we look at welfare and the inner city economy.

Every hour of meetings yesterday—and they were, for me, very emotional, very moving—confirmed why I believe in the plan that we have proposed for urban America. I kept hearing words like ownership, independence, dignity, enterprise, a lot of time from people who have never had a shot at dignity or enterprise or ownership. And it reinforced my belief that we must start with a set of principles and policies that foster personal responsibility, that refocus entitlement programs to serve those who are most needy, and increase the effectiveness of Government service through competition and true choice.

I believe in keeping power closer to the people, using States as laboratories for innovation. We cannot figure it all out back in Washington, DC, in some subcommittee or in the White House. And I believe in policies that encourage entrepreneurship, increase investment, create jobs. And these form the heart of the agenda for economic opportunity that I want to mention here.

Families can't thrive, children can't learn, jobs can't flourish in a climate of fear, however. And so first is our responsibility to preserve the domestic order. And a civilized society cannot tackle any of the really tough problems in the midst of chaos. And you know and I know it's just that simple. Violence and brutality destroy order, destroy the rule of law. And violence must never be rationalized. Violence must always be condemned.

We can reclaim our crime-ravaged neighborhoods through a new initiative that we call "Weed and Seed." And today I'm announcing a \$19 million "Weed and Seed" operation for the city of Los Angeles to

weed out the drug dealers and career criminals and then seed those neighborhoods with expanded educational, employment, and social services.

With safe and secure neighborhoods, we can spark an economic revival in urban America. And so, the second part of the agenda is to ask Congress to take action on enterprise zones, create these zones with a zero capital gains rate for entrepreneurs and investors who locate businesses and create jobs right here in America's inner cities.

And yes, I recognize that at the same time, we must help States bring innovation to the welfare systems. And at the Federal level, we've got to reform our own AFDC rules, stop penalizing people who want to work and save. These are the people who are mustering the individual initiative to get off welfare. And we've got to pledge ourselves to, at the Federal level, change the rules that keep them from doing just that.

Three: Safe, drug-free schools are places where our children can learn, but that's not enough. We've got to revolutionize our schools through community action, through competition, through innovation, through choice, principles at the heart of the strategy that we call America 2000. We must give children, these kids, these kids right here, the same opportunity as kids out in the suburbs.

And the fourth point: We must promote new hope through homeownership. People want a real stake, a real stake in their community, something of value that they can pass along to their kids. And that's what this HOPE initiative does. It turns public housing tenants into homeowners.

Now, these are just the highlight of an action agenda to bring hope and opportunity back to our inner cities. We have other ideas to try as well. Many in this room have innovative ideas they're trying right now. My first order of business upon my return to Washington will be to build a bipartisan effort in support of immediate action on this agenda. And I know some will say, "Well, you've proposed all this before." And that's true, they're right. And I'm proposing it again because, really, we must try something new. We've got to try something new. It does not take a social scientist to know that we must think differently. We've

tried the old ways of thinking. And now, as Lincoln says, "It is time to think anew."

And our approach is really a radical break from the policies of the past. It's new. Yes, it's new because it's never been tried before. And for the sake of the people of South Central, and the people in America's inner cities everywhere, I will work with the Congress to act now on this commonsense agenda.

You've been through an awful lot. You've been through an awful lot. And when I saw the verdict in the King case, my reaction was the same as yours; I told the Nation that. But I remain confident in our system of justice. And when I saw the violence and rage erupt in your streets, my reaction was the same as yours. We all knew we had to restore order. And when I saw and read about the heroic acts of firefighters and police or the selfless acts of so many citizens, my reaction was one of relief, one of hope for the future.

This morning I stopped by the hospital, Cedar, to see a young fireman who had been wantonly shot in the head as he was driving a fire truck to go out and put out fires that were ravaging somebody's neighborhood, maybe yours. The man's fighting for his life. And I think when we all go home we ought to pray for him.

Even in the very short time that I've been out here, I could sense that the real anguish in south central L.A. is a parent's concern about the kids, neighbors' concerns about the kids. And people are worried sick about the children. All must agree that whatever we do must be about the children. These kids are our future. And our actions in the wake of the tragedy are for them, not just here in Los Angeles. This is showcased now because of what you've been through, but it's all across the country.

And so far in these remarks I've mentioned what Government can do. And now let me talk just a little about what society must do. And yes, we have tried hard, spent a lot of money and haven't solved the problems. And some critics say that we are a morally, spiritually, and intellectually bankrupt nation. I don't believe that for one

single minute. And, yes, we have problems. We have tough problems to solve. But we remain the freest and the fairest and the most just and the most decent country on the face of the entire Earth. And we now—I know that we have the drive and the gumption to prevail over these problems we face.

Tom Bradley, your Mayor, was among a group of mayors who came to see me last January. He and I may differ on how we approach one Federal program or another. But I've repeated often what he and others said to me that day. They said that the most important problem facing our cities is the dissolution, the decline of the American family. And they're absolutely right. He was right; a mayor from a tiny town in North Carolina, he was right. The decline of the family is something we must be concerned about. And history tells us that society cannot succeed without some fundamental building blocks in place.

The state of our Nation is the state of our communities. And good communities are safe and decent. And the young people are cared for, and they're instilled with character and values and good habits for life. Good communities have good schools. And they provide opportunity and hope, rooted in the dignity of work and reward for achievement.

And that's why guaranteeing a hopeful future for the children of our cities is about a lot more than rebuilding burned-out buildings. It's about the love right here under this roof. It's about building a new American community. It's about rebuilding bonds between individuals and among ethnic groups and among races. And we must not let our diversity destroy us. It is central, you see, it is central to our strength as a Nation. Our ability to live and work together has really made America the inspiration to the entire world.

Across this country tens of thousands of groups, hundreds of thousands of individuals who have never been involved before, who will never be paid one single nickel for their efforts, must become partners in solving our most serious social problems. The people right here in this room know exactly what I'm talking about. An officer in the LAPD who's a board chairman right

here, I believe, in this organization, giving of his time, he knows what I'm talking about. Government alone cannot create the scale and energy needed to transform the lives of the people in need.

And I look around this auditorium and I am preaching to the choir because you're the ones that have your sleeves rolled up in your churches and in your communities, trying to help the other guy. In my conversations with the leaders of L.A.'s many communities, I heard over and over again that L.A. has many of the answers within itself.

I see our friend Bill Milliken here. He lives halfway across the country. There are four of his Cities in School programs, helping children learn here. And many members of a group called 100 Black Men, an inspirational group; for those not familiar with it, they mentor to the kids, the boys in South Central.

Now, if instead of 4, there were 25 Cities in School programs, and instead of 100, 10,000 black men working with boys, and so on with the hundreds of people in groups that work with the kids, there is no question that what happened last week wouldn't have been as bad. And so it only makes sense that a large part of our challenge is to dramatically expand in community after community the scale of what we already know works.

The phrase that I've repeated a lot and perhaps more than any other is worth repeating: From now on in America, any definition of a successful life must include serving others. And when we look to restoring a decent and hopeful future for our children, I mean this about every community:

First, every group and institution in America, schools, businesses, churches, certainly, must do its part. We must praise what works and share what works.

Secondly, all leaders, all leaders, must mobilize and inspire their people to take action.

Third, community centers must link those that care with those that are crying out for help.

Fourth, with respect, the media needs to show from time to time what's working, needs to cover what is working. And that way would help us share, that would really

help us share and repeat these successes many times over.

And finally, this one perhaps a little technical, but we've got to change our liability laws that frighten people away from helping others. We ought to care for each other more and sue each other less.

But there's something else. There's something else that society must cultivate that Government cannot possibly provide, something we can't legislate, something we can't establish by Government order. And I'm talking about the moral sense that must guide us all. I guess the simplest way to put it is, I'm talking about knowing right from wrong and then trying to do what's right.

Let me come back again to the little boy I spoke about earlier, Rudy Campbell. Remember, "badder, badder, badder"? There's a lesson he learned that survived the horror and the hate. And in the midst of all the chaos, in the midst of so much that's gone wrong, he knows what's right. When he was asked about the violence, here's what he said: "They should know what's right and wrong. Because when I was 4, that's what I learned."

Now, that has got to give us hope. May God bless the person who cared enough to teach that little guy right from wrong. But it's up to us to guarantee that all the millions of kids like him grow up in a better America.

And I believe we are right about family. We're right about freedom and free enterprise. And we're right with respect to the clergymen here and the church men and church women here. We are right about faith. And most of all, we are right about America's future.

You see, I fervently believe that we have the strength and the spirit in our Government, you can see it here today in our communities and in ourselves, to transform America into the Nation that we have dreamed of for generations.

May God bless each and every one of you in your work. And thank you very, very much.

Note: The President spoke at 9:18 a.m. at the Challenger Boys and Girls Club. In his remarks, he referred to William E. Milliken, president of Cities in Schools, Inc.

Nomination of Alexander Fletcher Watson To Be United States Ambassador to Brazil

May 8, 1992

The President today announced his intention to nominate Alexander Fletcher Watson, of Massachusetts, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador to the Federative Republic of Brazil. He would succeed Richard Huntington Melton.

Since 1989 Mr. Watson has served as Deputy Representative to the United Nations. Prior to this, he served as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Peru, 1986–

89; and Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Brasilia, Brazil, 1984–86. From 1981 to 1984, Mr. Watson served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Bogota, Colombia.

Mr. Watson graduated from Harvard College (A.B., 1961) and University of Wisconsin (M.A., 1969). He was born August 8, 1939, in Boston, MA. Mr. Watson is married, has two children, and resides in New York, NY.